

REMARKS

Claims 1-20, 23-30 are all the claims pending in the application. Support for the amendments to claim 1 may be found in the specification as originally filed, for example, at page 33, lines 1-12, and page 140, lines 8-10. Support for new claim 30 may be found in the specification as originally filed, for example, at page 65, lines 20-23, and page 34, lines 16-17.

I. **The Rejection Based on JP2001/310491, JP2001/328287 and Kawakami et al**

Claims 1-20 and 23-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over the disclosures of JP-A-2001/310491, JP-A-2001/328287 and Kawakami et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not obvious over the disclosures of JP-A-2001/310491, JP-A-2001/328287 and Kawakami et al and request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection in view of the following remarks.

The present invention involves a membrane heat transfer to enhance the adhesion between the image-forming layer and the image-receiving layer during laser transfer recording, making it possible to improve recording sensitivity, image quality (Tables 1 and 3) and transferability to actual paper (Table 3). The present invention also can exert an unexpected and extremely excellent effect of improving the surface conditions of the various layers and uniformity of image quality and recording sensitivity (Table 5) and the percent transfer under various humidity conditions of from 30%RH to 65%RH (Table 7).

On the other hand, JP-A-2001/310491 is allegedly advantageous in that an image having a good quality can be formed at a high resolution without having any white mark, even if no cushion layer is formed on the transfer material or image-receiving material. JP-A-2001/328287

is allegedly advantageous in that a multi-color image-forming method can be provided capable of forming on the image-receiving sheet an image having a stable transfer density which maintains a good quality under different humidity conditions (30%RH to 65%RH). The advantage disclosed by Kawakami is the improvement of sheet holding ability, sucking hole mark and dot gain reproducibility. In any event, the cited art does not teach or disclose a large-sized membrane heat transfer system that has a particular advantage of providing the surface of the image-forming layer with a smoother value of from 2.3 to 50 mmHg. It cannot be expected from the teachings of the cited art that the membrane heat transfer system of the present invention is capable of enhancing the adhesion between the image-forming layer and the image-receiving layer during laser transfer recording, improving the transferability to actual paper and realizing the desired surface conditions of various layers and uniformity of image quality and recording sensitivity while exerting an extremely excellent effect of improving the transferability under various humidity conditions of from 30%RH to 65%RH.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claims 1-20 and 23-29 is neither taught by nor made obvious from the disclosures of JP-A-2001/310491, JP-A-2001/328287 and Kawakami et al and it is requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

II. The Rejection Based on Takahashi or JP-A-2000/355177 and Kawakami et al

Claims 1-20 and 23-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over the disclosures of Takahashi or JP-A-2000/355177, each in view of Kawakami et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not obvious over the disclosures of Takahashi or JP-A-2000/355177 and Kawakami et al and request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection in view of the following remarks.

While JP-A-2000/355177 and Takahashi claim that the smoother value of the surface of the image-forming layer is 2 mmHg or less, the present invention claims that the smoother value of the surface of the image-forming layer is in a range of from 2.3 to 50 mmHg. Therefore, the present invention cannot be anticipated or rendered obvious from the teachings of Takahashi and JP-A-2000/355177. JP-A-2000/355177 claims that even if the system is large-sized, vacuumization can be conducted at a high speed during laser heat transfer recording and uniform adhesion and image transferability can be provided without giving any gap with respect to the heat transfer image-receiving material provided in close contact therewith, allowing image recording by a high output laser such as multi-mode semiconductor laser and hence making it possible to provide a high precision and quality image at a high rate. The advantage disclosed by Kawakami is the improvement of sheet holding ability, sucking hole mark and dot gain reproducibility. In any event, the cited art does not teach or disclose a large-sized membrane heat transfer system that has a particular advantage of providing the surface of the image-forming layer with a smoother value of from 2.3 to 50 mmHg. It cannot be expected from the teachings of the cited art that the membrane heat transfer system of the present invention is capable of enhancing the adhesion between the image-forming layer and the imagereceiving layer during laser transfer recording, improving the transferability to actual paper and realizing the desired surface conditions of various layers and uniformity of image quality and recording

sensitivity while exerting an extremely excellent effect of improving the transferability under various humidity conditions of from 30%RH to 65%RH.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claims 1-20 and 23-29 is neither taught by nor made obvious from the disclosures of Takahashi or JP-A-2000/355177 and Kawakami et al and it is requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

III. The Rejection Based on Yamamoto or Tsuno in view of Kawakami

Claims 1-14, 20 and 23-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over the disclosures of Yamamoto or Tsuno, each in view of Kawakami et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not obvious over the disclosures of Yamamoto or Tsuno and Kawakami et al and request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw this rejection in view of the following remarks.

The advantage of Yamamoto is that the use of a heat-sensitive transfer sheet containing a nitrogen-containing compound makes it possible to obtain a transferred image excellent in dot shape, including edge sharpness of image, gradation reproducibility and approximation to printed matter using only area gradation. Yamamoto's patent is also allegedly advantageous in that the transferred image thus obtained can be fairly retransferred to actual printing paper without being much affected by the environment for transferring and the material of actual printing paper, making it possible to provide a good retransferred image suitable for color proof. Specific advantages of Yamamoto's patent are shape of dot, reproducibility of gradation, approximation to printed image, dot quality, and environment for transferring.

Tsuno claims that the use of a specific image-receiving sheet makes it possible to provide a good transferred image having a high sensitivity (i.e., high density) and little fog without being much affected by the change of atmosphere (temperature and humidity) during the image formation. In some detail, the temperature dependence of sensitivity and fog is small. The advantage disclosed by Kawakami is the improvement of sheet holding ability, sucking hole mark and dot gain reproducibility. In any event, the cited art does not teach or disclose a large-sized membrane heat transfer system that has a particular advantage of providing the surface of the image-forming layer with a smoother value of from 2.3 to 50 mmHg. It cannot be expected from the disclosures of the cited art that the membrane heat transfer system of the present invention is capable of enhancing the adhesion between the image-forming layer and the image-receiving layer during laser transfer recording, improving the transferability to actual paper and realizing the desired surface conditions of various layers and uniformity of image quality and recording sensitivity while exerting an extremely excellent effect of improving the transferability under various humidity conditions of from 30%RH to 65%RH.

For the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of claims 1-14, 20 and 23-29 is neither taught by nor made obvious from the disclosures of Yamamoto or Tsuno, each in view of Kawakami et al and it is requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be reconsidered and withdrawn.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that their claimed invention is allowable and ask that the rejections 35 U.S.C. §103 be reconsidered and withdrawn. Applicants

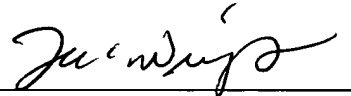
AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No.: 10/052,392

respectfully submit that this case is in condition for allowance and allowance is respectfully solicited.

If any points remain at issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the local exchange number listed below.

Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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